VALUES DRIVEN CHANGE PROCESS

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

This research dealt with a cultural or values driven process to manage change which encompassed many aspects of the fire service. The problem which the FRS faced was that there were some negative aspects of the organisation's culture which may have been inhibiting change from being implemented.

The purpose of the Applied Research Project was to recommend strategies which could be used to bring about change through a values driven change management model. An action research methodology was used during the project to identify the following:

1.   What affect does culture have on an organisation?

2.   What is the contemporary view of a set of values and behaviours facilitating a values driven change process?

3.   How should the FRS line up those values that are applied in the workplace with its espoused values?

4.   What implementation strategies should the FRS employ to bring about a new organisational perspective?

A literature review was conducted utilising a range of leadership and management publications, as well as referring to Public Sector Guidelines. The procedure also included assessing the organisation's strategic planning process and the values statements which had been developed.

The findings revealed that a values driven approach had been utilised by a number of agencies and that they were successful, mainly because it is through people and their attitudes that work is accomplished.

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A plan was required to line up people's values with those espoused by an organisation and the process, even though it would take some time, required the work force's participation.

During implementation of the cultural change, it appeared that an incremental approach should be employed and that communication and education needed to be constantly employed so that new behaviours become the norm.

The recommendations included progressing a cultural change process through the development of value and behavioural statements. From this, an implementation plan to cover not only career but also volunteer members of the service should be developed. Part of that implementation plan should include strategies for an incremental approach to change in a transitional perspective.

Widespread communication and role modelling strategies should be undertaken. Lastly, the whole process should be reviewed during the next strategic planning operation.

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INTRODUCTION

It is accepted that change is sweeping organisations at an unprecedented rate (Kouzes and Posner, 1987). Like others, the FRS is changing significantly. It is not only its core response business activities that are changing to that of prevention and risk management, but also its style of management, structure and the way in which people interact.

To facilitate this change process there are a number of strategies which can be utilised to assist in the journey. The approach depends largely on the amount of change that will occur, the pace, scope and depth of the change. Although there are a number of different possible approaches, a values driven change approach has been used in Australia by one of the more successful and publicised organisations, the National Australia Bank.

This approach builds upon the concept that organisations were originally founded upon a set of values and behaviours which underlined the way they focussed on the community they served and how they were supported in their business. According to Duck (1993, p. 113) "change is fundamentally about feelings. She went on further to say, "the most successful change programs reveal that large organisations connect with their people most directly through their values – and values, ultimately, are about beliefs and feelings".

For the FRS to grow and prosper as a service provider for the community, it needs to challenge and review business and management processes as well as its values and behaviours.

The problem for the FRS is that some negative aspects of the organisation's culture appear to be inhibiting the change process from occurring.

The purpose of the Applied Research Project is to recommend to the FRS ways to implement a values driven change management process.

An action research methodology was selected to carry out the study and project. A literary review of current publications was conducted to ascertain a contemporary view of the significance of the values and behaviours in managing change. The search looked at the social impact values have on the people in an organisation, stakeholders and the community which an agency serves.

The current FRS Strategic Plan, which included the values and behaviour statements, was reviewed to ascertain their applicability. Additionally, barriers were identified which would inhibit the organisation's ability to manage change and ultimately meet customer needs.

Interviews were conducted with senior executive members of the FRS to determine their perspective. Also a review of our values workshop material was undertaken to determine a cross section of the organisation's view on the values espoused within the FRS.

The research questions specifically included in the study were the following:

1. What affect does culture have on an organisation?

2. What is the contemporary view of a set of values and behaviours facilitating a values driven change process?

3. How should the FRS line up those values which are applied in the workplace with its espoused values?

4. What implemental strategies should the FRS employ to bring about a new organisational perspective?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The FRS has nearly a 100 year traditional history built on fire fighting as its core business. Today it is a multi-functional organisation spread across a third of the nation as well as two Commonwealth Territory Islands. Its role has changed significantly to that of an operationally multi-functional organisation focussing directly on preventing emergencies from occurring. Along with this important change, there has been an expansion of roles of the FRS into hazardous materials combat, road accident and other industrial rescues.

Compared to the operational aspects, the FRS is also "undergoing a period of unprecedented change", (Kucan Personal Communication, June 1997, p 2) as far as other managerial and organisational aspects are concerned. These changes have been brought about by a worldwide trend which impact on service providers. These changes include:

- increasing customer demands and expectations

- new technology

- the regionalisation and decentralisation of workforces and service delivery

- the upskilling of workforces and the introduction of competency based training principles

- the need to improve service performance across the broad spectrum

- changes to organisational structures

- outsourcing of non core activities

- a more diverse workforce which represents the community

- management practices and styles.

These changes represent enormous pressures upon an agency and the FRS, like others, is evolving rapidly. Developing strategies for the change initiatives to work in such a dynamic environment is a challenge. But without strategies to bring about improvements that are supported by executives, managers and workers, the process may flounder and eventually fail. (Price Waterhouse 1995). One of the ways is to drive the change process through a mechanism that is at the heart of an organisation, its values.

Values set a standard, a set of maps by which to guide people's interaction, the way they are treated within an organisation and ultimately measured. They are "a set of principles which make the organisation unique and distinctive". (Kouzes and Posner 1987, p 187). Whetton and Cameron (1995, p. 62) saw that, "Values are among the most stable and enduring characteristics of individuals. They are the foundations upon which attitudes and personal preferences are formed. They are the basis for crucial decisions, life directions and personal tastes".

Because of the FRS's long history and significance of its unstated beliefs and culture, a values driven change process is a technique which may suit a service which is very much a people organisation.

A process of this nature would bring about the necessary change in a very controlled manner and furthermore, as the FRS is traditionally slow to accept and implement change (Exchequer Report, 1988) an attitudinal technique to promote change seems appropriate.

Without a clear strategy, the intent to transform the organisation would not materialise and thereby put the community at serious risk. The importance of developing a guiding map cannot be understated as the very existence of the organisation, as it is known, may not survive (Daft, 1995).

The research project is based upon developing a strategy to bring about incremental widespread change within the FRS based upon a values driven change approach. The project utilises the study and work carried out at the National Fire Academy of the Executive Fire Officer Program Course, Strategic Management of Change. The Strategic Management of Change Course provided a framework for which participants could follow to bring about systematic change within their own service.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's global environment, an organisation's ability to gain competitive advantage will not be realised by counting on its past. It is in "its ability to use its current resources that worked in the past with new and innovative approaches" (Shaw, 1997, p.3). He went on further to say that organisations need to "embrace change or die".

Force for Change

Not only do organisations need to recognise the force of change is upon them, but the pace of change occurring is also unprecedented.

Furthermore, change is not going to abate. It appears it will increase in intensity due to the technological and information changes occurring within society. Hamel and Brahalad (1994, p. 29) see the change as "standing on the verge and for some it will be a precipice, of a revolution as profound as that which gave birth to modern industry".

According to Whiteley (1995) "change can be expressed as a negotiation or the renegotiation of shared meaning about what is to be valued, believed in and aimed for. Organisational change constitutes a renewal of parts or even the whole of organisational culture, structures, processes and relationships within the outside environment".

The Public Sector is not immune from either change or the speed in which it is occurring. Even though most literature cites cases about major corporations success and failures in this changing environment and their need to adjust to maintain competitive edge and market share, public sector agencies also need to have strategies to deal with change with their sphere. Viljoen (1991) recognised however, that the public sector is subject to a number of constraints not usually experienced in the private sector. For example, the allocation of resources, both financial and physical, are usually not tied to specific levels of performance. Most public sector agencies also work within Acts of Parliament, which in themselves can restrict the way in which funding and innovative approaches to ways of doing business can be achieved. Also, because of their very nature being linked with the political agenda, this can influence direction and strategies.

However, whether an organisation is public or private is an irrelevant according to Viljoen (1991). He sees that the need to have a strategic view of managing change is a corporate necessity. The real challenge for public sector agencies is to adapt change processes to suit their environment.

While change is recognised as part of every day life, both organisationally and privately, it is the amount of change which needs to be determined by an organisation before embarking upon the process. Simply changing one small aspect, such as an introduction of a new technology or the way in which work is organised, requires quite different strategies to that when the organisation wishes to transform itself.

Strategic Dimensions of Change

Daft (1995, p.265, 267) saw four types of change which an organisation could focus upon. They were "products and services, strategy and structure, people and culture and technology". He further went on to say that the types can also be "interdependent" in that making a change in one aspect can often lead to requiring changes in another or the whole sphere.

Products and services relate to the new service or product that an agency may produce and for a service organisation pertains to the services that an organisation may offer. For example, a fire service may offer specialised industrial training.

As far as strategy and structure is concerned, these changes relate to organisational configuration, the strategic management processes of an agency and the way administration is carried out.

Technology changes include greater efficiency and design in production for an agency involved in manufacturing. In a more service orientated organisation, changes in work methods and the equipment that are used to perform tasks would be involved.

The fourth stage, people and culture, relates to changes in people needed in the new environment and the realignment in the culture of an organisation. These are such issues as values, attitudes, beliefs and employee empowerment and involvement across the whole organisation.

Whilst Daft (1995), as well as Viljoen (1991), saw that change through the cultural context, that is the values and attitudes of individuals in an organisation, can provide a strong influence in the change process. Viljoen (1991, p. 44) said,

> The cultural approach to strategic management is very 'soft' (but this does not mean sloppy). It embodies an attempt by management to instil in all employees the core beliefs and values of the organisation and then allowing them to manage themselves using these beliefs and values as a guide.

Emerging from the dimension of the changes required within an organisation is the question whether an agency should continue to further develop its existing processes and ways of doing business, or should they take a transitional or a transformational view.

According to Limerick and Cunnington (1993, p. 141), transformational leaders create new situations and process; transactional leaders work by increment.

Thus transformational leaders focus on the institution as a whole, creating a new vision of the possible and inspiring other to follow. Transactional leaders, on the other hand, have a more instrumental focus, contracting and transacting with others in the operation of a stable system.

This suggests significant organisational changes in strategy, the structure and processes as well as redefining a culture cannot be accomplished in a transactional and incremental manner. Viljoen (1991) described incremental approaches to change as management moving in an evolutionary way from its stable framework. The process involved continuously looking at new options. Once they had been expanded and accepted, they were gradually brought into the new stable framework. This is compared to the bolder approach where organisations are clearly out of alignment with their business and environment and major transformational changes are required to adjust that out of alignment.

Resistance and Barriers to Change

However, the perspective of the change needs to be weighed up against both the organisational and personal resistance that may be encountered to the change process. Those organisations which do not need to go through strategic reorganisation may not find it appropriate to go through transformational change. This is because, according to Viljoen (1991), an organisation may find that the change process is so complex and very difficult to achieve that it would be more effective to take an incremental approach.

He explained that incremental approach allows for better sequencing of events and allows for greater commitment from people within an organisation, given that they may be very large and complex and the culture of the organisation needs time to adjust.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) saw,

the building of trust within an organisation is an important aspect as it promotes the acceptance of change mainly because in a high trust environment even if some communication is not that accurate it will not inhibit change. The pace in which change should occur should be realistic as it takes time for people to grow accustomed to the new way of doing business.

This was further backed by Wellins, Byham and Wilson (1991) who say that organisations should have realistic expectations of how long the change process should take. The pace of change should be in line with the teams that are skilled to carry out the tasks. An organisation should encourage its employees to adapt change to fit in to the world that exists around them. By giving them flexibility it gives the employees an opportunity to adapt the concepts to fit into their normal work. To facilitate change, organisations should also consider making structural changes which can be identified by all. They are symbols which indicate that change has occurred and that it directly affects those people within an organisation.

Because change can create fear and anxiety amongst people, it is important that a change process occurs in an environment of job security.

Therefore, they believe job security should be offered to assist in the process and not create martyrs out of people that have been effected by the change.

In public sector agencies smaller incremental changes may be more acceptable in the political context as significant and widespread change may create sustained fallout which overtime may not be acceptable (Viljoen, 1991).

Limerick and Cunnington (1993, p. 166) identify "that the dominant problem in organisations is that they have to handle both gradual, familiar change and discontinuity". Discontinuity was described in their book as radical or transformational change.

Whether it be incremental or radical change, one thing is common from the literature, is that an organisation needs to have a strategic plan. Depending whether it is a process, technology, people, culture and organisational change there needs to be a management strategy in place.

Organisational Culture

Every organisation, says Deal and Kennedy (1982, p. 4), has a culture. It may take on a number of forms however "whether the culture is weak or strong, culture has a powerful influence throughout an organisation; it affects practically everything".

According to Whiteley (1995, p. 19,20), "The culture of an organisation, like that of society, is a homemade blueprint for seeing the world in a particular way". These patterns of behaviour are built on what people "value greatly". They become so accepted they form the normal way to behave whether the patterns of behaviour are spelt out or not.

They are "handed down as organisation memory or folklore". It is "difficult to pin down, nearly impossible to quantify or measure and remarkably resistant to change".

Whilst Shaw (1987, p. 139) referred to culture as being "those informal aspects of organisational life that have an impact on the performance of a group". He said organisational leaders saw that culture was the softer element of organisational life but it was often the "key in determining how well an organisation or team operates".

One of the most important aspects is the process to link personal values with those of the organisation. If they are opposed they are seen to be in "culture clash" (Whiteley 1995, p. 15) with the ultimate loss of competitive edge. The ideal situation for an organisation and its people to be in is that they share a common set of behaviours and code of conduct.

According to Viljoen (1991, p. 291), "there is considerable evidence to suggest that strong culture organisations excel in implementing strategic plans". He further goes on to discuss that a strong culture provides an organisation and its employees a guide to achieve objectives and that people in a strong culture are motivated to take appropriate actions to bring about whatever strategic plans require.

Another aspect which Kotter (1990, p. 138) identifies with changing environments, is the need for competent leadership. He sees that it "takes strong leadership to create a useful culture". Furthermore, people changes, according to Daff (1995), are generally the responsibility of the senior management of an organisation.

Shaw (1997, p. 140) saw that there were some "critical actions" required to ensure that an organisation developed a suitable culture. They were –

- Develop a common vision and shared view of competitive realities.

- Live by genuinely felt values and operating principles.

- Build familiarity across levels and groups.

- Encourage a culture of risk taking and experimentation.

- Make visible a few powerful symbols of trust and collaboration.

Values in Relation to Corporate Culture

Corporate culture is built on a set of underlying values and according to Scott, Jaffe and Tobe (1993, p. 19), "Values are the essence of a company's philosophy for achieving success. They are the bedrock of Corporate Culture". Furthermore, Deal and Kennedy (1982) saw values as providing an organisation with a common sense of purpose and direction. They are a guideline for employees' behaviour on a day to day basis.

Because people are individuals they also have different frameworks which they live within. Everyone has had different experiences, they possess forms of knowledge and beliefs and because of this they are motivated by different value systems. Since people work within an organisation they bring a variety of values with them and therefore, they are a powerful influence on an organisation's culture (Whiteley, 1995).

The culture and therefore values of an organisation distinguish one workplace or organisation from another. They are unique because of this factor.

As values have such an influence upon the way in which they operate,

developing a set of shared values is one of the most important tasks of

managers (Deal and Kennedy, 1982).

Kouzes and Posner (1993, p. 61) said that "values served a number of

functions. They are standards that guide our conduct in a variety of settings

and situations". When the values of an individual and organisations are clear,

people are able to act independently because they are able to identify which

behaviours are in conflict with those of their own, society's and other

organisations.

Whilst Pascale (1990) saw that shared values could also be hard minded in

nature through to soft hearted. The hard minded values were seen as being

more short term focussed and business targets were more financially driven.

While on the other hand, the preoccupation with soft hearted values could lead

to loss of effectiveness and efficiency. Most hard minded values are

quantifiable and readily recognisable compared with the softer approach which

pertain to treating people with respect, valuing customers and making a social

contribution. He saw they were essential to balance the more concrete values.

The key was to mould the two dimensions of values into the organisational

culture so that business imperatives are realised while higher order ideals

affecting people are in place.

Changing Organisational Cultures through the Values Approach

One of the most difficult aspects of a change process is changing the

culture of an organisation according to Deal and Kennedy (1982).

They relate that it takes considerable time to cement long lasting and real change in an organisation. Further, Viljoen (1991, p. 307) saw the process as "never ending", with managers constantly needing to monitor the culture of an organisation and "fine tuning it".

The way to build genuine working relationships is through building shared values. The challenge is to bring those different values together. In today's working environment, simply announcing an organisation's values will not work. Everyone should participate in their development and final agreement of what are their shared values (Kouzes and Posner, 1993).

Whilst Deal and Kennedy (1982) saw there was a necessity to have an identified need to change the culture of an organisation. He went on to say that cultural change is only needed when it is out of alignment with the outside environment. The way to ensure change was to involve as many people in the process and as frequently as possible so that the new culture, including its rituals, are understood and accepted and that the old rituals are dispensed with. He also saw that without training and skills enhancement, new values and behaviour patterns would not be accomplished because it is the training that assists people to move from one culture to another.

Although Kanter (1983) saw techniques, such as strategic planning models, were used to manage change, they provided no guarantee of success. They assist to determine structure and processes, step by step guides to change but they were only one aspect. She saw that organisations had greater success in developing their plans than actually getting people to own and implement them.

Therefore Kanter (1983, p. 305) suggests that organisations should have "an outline of patterns more appropriate and realistic, a set of guiding principles" that people can understand and see how they fit the situation they are in. These principles are based on an organisation's particular strengths and traditions. By creating conditions which empower people to look for and work new ways of doing business, the process of change can be enhanced.

Whiteley (1995, p. 74) saw that the way to create shared values was through generating a set of "core values". The process involved employees and managers brain storming a set of values and ultimately developing a smaller group of core values through discussion and clarification of what each of these means. From this, a statement of values is established. From these a set of behaviour specifications can be drawn up and this is basically the gap between what is a short value statement to the actual behaviours which people will follow. This is the initial stages and from the values stems the vision of an organisation and ultimately, mission and strategies are developed. The values and vision determine the business that an organisation is in, or its mission, and ultimately, strategic plans identify the resources, priorities, structures and systems that will be in place to make sure that the values initially established are supported.

According to Scott, "et al" (1993, p. 23-26), one of the "keys to greater effectiveness is a close link between personal and organisational values". Differences will always be evident with the diversity of people within an organisation but "creating consensus about key values is an important task for any group".

By clarifying and aligning "personal and work values" can reduce "conflict", alleviate contradictions that make people confused and frustrated.

Pascale (1990) recognised that the development of visions, values and guiding principles are not established by an individual or sections of management, but are the product of discussions and participation from across an organisation. If they were not they would just be statements without any real meaning to employees and therefore, no commitment to their guiding principles.

Managers and leaders need to regard the values "as never to be broken psychological contact between themselves and employees and society" (Pascale, 1990, p. 78). They become institutionalised guiding principles that are honoured and point an organisation in the right direction and for it to "focus its energies".

One of the ways to keep people on track, according to Kouzes and Posner (1993, p.209), is to constantly remind them of an organisation's "values", commitments and beliefs. This is accomplished through mandatorily communicating at every opportunity. Methods include, discussion at every opportunity, both formal and informal, through to publications in the form of news letters, magazines and the like.

Like with any aspect of a business, things change and according to Kouzes and Posner (1993) values should be evaluated on a regular basis and adjusted to suit the changing environment.

PROCEDURES

The main outcome of the research project was to provide the FRS with strategies it could employ to bring about change through the cultural context.

As the organisation had embarked upon developing a vision, mission and set of values, as part of its strategic planning process, the research project was selected because it would enable a comparison between the process employed so far by the FRS to that which other agencies and writers had experienced or researched.

By utilising this information it would benefit the FRS, particularly as the strategic planning process was new. Further, the strategic plan and cultural approach to change was in the very early stages of development and implementation.

An action research methodology was employed to source the material. Initial documentation was sourced from the National Fire Academy's Strategic Management of Change Module, which indicated some aspects of the FRS's process might need refining. Documentation of the FRS's strategic plan development and values workshops were obtained as part of the process in the early stages as well as the Western Australian Public Sector Standards Commission's Code of Ethics.

Once this material had been collated, a literature review was conducted which encompassed the wider view of change within organisations. From there, the research concentrated on the effect organisation's culture has upon an organisation's performance, the part values play in developing organisational culture, some of the barriers or pitfalls which may be encountered, and lastly, strategies which have been used successfully in a values driven change approach.

These perspectives were significant to the research project, as this aspect of the approach had not been developed by the FRS. Literature was sourced from the Leadership and Management Section of the FRS's library, tertiary institutions, as well as articles obtained from the Internet.

A search of organisations within the Fire Service environment in Australia and New Zealand occurred to ascertain if they had utilised the values approach to change. This proved fruitless.

The research project is limited in that the writer was unable to identify other public sector agencies, and in particular, fire services in Australia, which had taken this approach to the strategic management of change. Although one major successful Australian Corporation, the National Australia Bank, is approaching change through its cultural framework, and some material was sourced on its plans, the research was mainly confined to a literature review.

RESULTS

From the research into Corporate Culture and the behaviour exhibited through the values of people, the following questions resulted being answered.

1. What affect does culture have on an organisation?

The literature identified that every organisation has patterns of behaviour which affect the way in which people carry out work, interact on a social and formal basis, communicate, learn, treat customers and a myriad of other things. They are the customs and practices exercised by people in every day life.

Deal and Kennedy (1982, p. 44) summed up this by saying cultures were sometimes "difficult to read from the outside", but because culture practically affects all aspects of an organisation, it "has a major effect on the success of a business".

The culture of an organisation is reflected in its fundamental character or what an organisation stands for. The culture is important because behaviours flow throughout it and influence the way that everyone in it works. This is particularly the case in a decentralised and regionalised agency where a strong culture assists to hold an organisation together. Managers develop these strong cultures so that everyone in the group acts in the same direction and work as a team wherever they may be situated.

It was found that writers saw the culture of an organisation as the "soft side" or "soft element" but if organisations did not understand and manage this factor, they would lose their competitive edge. Organisations also are not made up of robots and even though they can import technology and systems to replace existing ones, it is the people and their spirit that make things happen.

Whilst culture may also be difficult to identify, a common thread throughout the literature indicates that the culture of an organisation is extremely difficult to change. However, if an organisation needs to change to meet new challenges, leaders need to understand the impact culture has on this process.

Those organisations that have what is known as a strong culture are able to implement strategic plans with greater success.

People are aware of the objectives, understand them and are motivated to taking whatever actions are required. However, those organisations with weaker identified cultures, although they may have developed strategic plans, usually are unable to implement them because they are imposed by a system process or policies and do not go to the heart of a person's value system.

On the down side for an organisation, it was found that if the environment changed while the culture continued in the same fashion, the performance or relevance of an organisation to compete would be questionable.

2. **What is the contemporary view of a set of values and behaviours facilitating a values driven change process?**

The common thread throughout the research indicates that corporate culture is based upon a set of values whether they are what have been described as core or key values or beliefs. Because values are a powerful influence on people in their every day activities, they have a major influence on an organisation and therefore, any change process that may be undertaken.

Whiteley (1995, p. 3) summed up change as "the notion of change requires a concern with changing mind sets", while Deal and Kennedy (1992, p. 164) saw it as "cultural transformation". It was found that there are strategic planning models which identify a number of types of change an organisation may go through. These were identified as processes and services, strategy and structure, people and cultures and lastly, technology.

However, even though organisations can change certain aspects of their business, the changes are interdependent on each other.

Whilst these types of change have been cited, according to a number of authors, they support that values not only influence culture they also drive an organisation's business objectives. This is followed by the strategies and processes whether they are what is known as the soft or hard side of an organisation. It is from the shared values, vision and mission that the strategies, policies and systems are then developed. These technological systems, as they are described, are designed to support the values, vision and mission.

Another aspect, which appeared common, was that values assisted people to make decisions about what to do during times when there was no clear direction. This is particularly important during times of volatility where change is occurring in environments rapidly. Values also provide cohesion in times of consolidation and new mind sets when an organisation is in renewal or transformation.

It appears that with global competition, organisations being decentralised and changes in technology being extensive, there is a growing trend for organisations to have a means of ensuring they remain in existence.

Additionally, because work forces are changing, units of business are getting smaller and the role of managers is developing, corporate culture or the values of an organisation will increasingly become more important.

These organisations with strong shared values and seen to be able to enable an organisation to adapt to new environments and respond to changing circumstances and draw upon their beliefs when times are tough and new challenges are upon them.

3. **How should the FRS line up those values which are applied in the workplace with its espoused values?**

To establish the ideal or renewal, the literature review identified a number of actions which should take place. The organisation firstly needs to have a clearly identified need to change its culture. This change may be necessary for a number of reasons, but once this has been understood and accepted a step by step process should be followed.

One of the most important aspects which was derived from the project was that an organisation needs to create alignment between its groups and individual values or behaviours. They also needed to be shared by the whole workplace. To create these shared values, it meant that both managers and workers needed to develop them together, without this they would only be statements with no commitment or real intent from the people.

The concept of values was found sometimes to be mistaken for rules. Because values are the very essence of people's emotion, they will energise, motivate and inspire people to do great things.

A workshop approach was found to be one of the most effective methods whereby people could debate and discuss the establishment of what they saw as their guiding principles.

To determine the core values, Whiteley (1995) saw that during the process the group should brainstorm a set of values from which a smaller or core of values should be identified. Another aspect which was required involved the clarification of the core values statements, which were very short in content, was through specifications which spelt out the behaviour which people would exhibit when living the values.

Although the culture of an organisation and therefore, its values, are mostly understood, according to the study, they are rarely explored or discussed openly. They should be brought to the surface so that they are discussed and agreement reached on what is most important for them and the organisation. If this did not occur it was found conflicts and contradictions would surface leaving people unclear and confused about the values.

Some values were also to be found contradicting those of the espoused or acted upon values. By discussing and clarifying the behaviour, both personal and corporate, people know what is expected, the activities that will be pursued and why they are there.

Once the values have been established the FRS then needs to institutionalise them so that they become fundamental behaviours in a workplace. It was found that leaders within an organisation were responsible to regard the values as a set of principles which were never to be broken. They should, through their interaction, communicate and champion the shared values at every opportunity, and by every means.

4. What implementation strategies should the FRS employ to bring about a new organisational perspective?

It appears that it does not matter whether an agency is in the public or private sector, they need to have strategies in place to deal with change. What was found however, was that public sector agencies did have constraints not usually experienced by the private sector. The real challenge for a public sector agency was to ensure that the change process was suited to the environment in which they were operating.

Given that the FRS has been identified as an organisation that does not embrace change readily, an incremental approach would be the most appropriate change process to undertake. This would allow for better sequencing of events and time for people within the FRS to commit themselves to the process. Furthermore, an incremental approach gives people time to adjust to the new culture.

Another aspect, which supports an incremental approach, is that the pace of change should be matched with the teams and people within organisations skills to make the change occur.

The process will be enhanced, according to the literature, by regularly communicating the values of the organisation and modelling behaviour at all times. Management should apply the behaviours in a never to be broken framework.

Another aspect which was found during the research was that building of trust within an organisation is an important aspect and this is more likely to occur if people share a common set of general principles and norms of how to act. In organisations, which are decentralised and regionalised, high trust environments are critical because they must work towards goals in a small team environment isolated from the central core with its directions and communication.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the employment of a cultural approach to change compares with the findings of the literature review. The process recommended encompasses a contemporary view of the importance that values and behaviours have on the direction of an organisation and those strategies which can be employed successfully to align people's customs and practices to those espoused by an organisation.

The research comprised a variety of leadership and management publications that overwhelmingly supported a cultural approach to change because it tapped into people's emotions. Although it was difficult to implement, a values driven approach was a powerful influence on people's behaviour.

What was evident during the study, was that the writers saw the culture of an organisation as its "soft element". But because an organisation was made up of people, it was their spirit that was utilised to make things happen. Without an understanding of this aspect, as well as being able to manage, it was likely to cause any change process to meet significant resistance.

Although the literature cites a number of organisations that have adopted a cultural or values driven approach, this method has not been widely used by some of the larger, more well known public sector agencies, even though the methodology has been documented for sometime.

Another interesting aspect which surfaced was that incremental change was advocated by a number of authors. This appears to be the case because it allows an organisation to move from a place of stability to one of a new framework. This was advocated notably in cases where organisations were bureaucracies and tended to very slow to adopt change. Using this framework, it allowed people to work through several incremental steps so they were given time to be committed to the change that was occurring and ultimately, the new organisational culture.

The results indicate that there should be a strategic plan of how to line up the values currently exercised within an agency with those that are espoused. The process of realignment took up a considerable length of time to accomplish and it required total commitment from senior management. The process in the first instance involved everyone and once the values had been established, continual commitment and communication was essential for the cultural change to occur.

There are a number of implications that come out of the research. Having identified that the organisation is slow to change, is bureaucratic in nature and is subject to political influences, a transitional and incremental approach may be more appropriate. This would be instead of a more transformational approach.

As the FRS has gone down a path of developing a core set of values, mission, vision and strategies, it is clear from the research that this aspect is only one small feature of a cultural change process utilising a values and behavioural model. There is significant work to still be accomplished so that people's actions reflect those behavioural patterns.

Although there is considerable work still to be done, the initial workshops to raise awareness of a set of values was not a waste of time. It was a sound basis to start and then continue the shaping of the culture. What was found was that the behavioural elements which were developed from the value statements now need to be workshopped throughout the FRS so that people understand and are committed to those behaviours.

Furthermore, the results indicate that as this is going to be a long process, there needs to be communication strategies to develop so that communication and education permeates the organisation. Furthermore, management must be fully committed to living the values at all times. Because of this aspect, training and development will be required so that managers understand the values approach and utilise it in their decision making and interaction with everyone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research conducted revealed there are distinct advantages in adopting a people or cultural approach to change because the commitment of people within an organisation and their behaviours provide the competitive element. Organisations that are decentralised and regionalised should take advantage of a cultural approach as it assists to give clear direction to the independent teams wherever they may be established.

Values appeared to be mostly understood by people, however they are rarely explored or discussed openly. Therefore they should be clarified through open forums and agreement reached on which were important for not only the organisation but for them personally.

Developing a set of values and behaviours requires a process that will take some time to accomplish before the behaviours become institutionalised. This should be assisted through a clear communication strategy, as well as managers and leaders supporting and talking about values at every opportunity.

Given a common thread of success by organisations using a shared values approach, the following recommendations for the FRS are proposed.

1. The service should build on the good work already done in the development of the organisation's values. The behavioural elements that have also been developed should now be widely discussed. A workshop environment involving the workforce is supported so that at the end of the process they are understood by all and agreement reached on them.

2. An implementation plan should be developed so that all the elements of the change process can be dealt with. This plan should include not only the career staff within the FRS but also its volunteer force, which forms the majority of people within the service. Even though this will be difficult to manage, this process is imperative because of the decentralised nature of the sites and the impact that their cultural has upon the service.

3. As part of the implementation strategy, an incremental or transitional approach should be undertaken.

This approach would allow the service to move from its established base through a step by step process towards a new framework. Clearly the service has not gone through a great deal of change in the past and does not accept change readily. By utilising this process, the barriers to change should be minimised, particularly as the service operates in a bureaucratic and political environment.

4. Communication and role modelling strategies should be developed. The purpose of the strategy is to have the values clearly enunciated and their worth for individuals, and the service explained.

5. A review of the core values and value statements should be undertaken on a regular basis to ensure that they are in line with the organisation's direction. As the FRS is in its early stages of a cultural change process, the first review is suggested in the next strategic planning process. This will allow time for the workshops and communication strategies to be implemented and for people to be able to have a more informed view on the values and behaviours. The community will ultimately benefit from changes to the service that is provided to them. By utilising a values driven change process, a more effective service should be provided. The change should be accomplished without disruption, which sometimes can occur if barriers are erected to the change process. Politically, a well implemented change transition would be welcomed as the FRS provides the community with a wide spectrum of services across the state.

Ultimately, a values driven change process should lift morale because of people's personal involvement and commitment to the direction which they have helped develop.

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